

There is a proposed Bill that has been written that is called: AN ACT CONCERNING TAX FAIRNESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

Which will: Adjust the state grants in lieu of taxes for state-owned property and property owned by private nonprofit colleges and hospitals.

Details of the proposed bill can be read here:

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/cgabillstatus/cgabillstatus.asp...>

As you may or may not know the Pilot payments to Voluntown have been insufficient and as a result the taxpayer bears the burden. If passed as is, this burden will become cast in stone.

The passing of this bill would lock in funding with no recognition of current town related expenses and future costs.

The bill is 70 pages long but it is easy reading as far as legislation goes.

In Sec 2, Section 12-19b (b) the Town of Voluntown is granted a fixed payment of \$60,000, with respect to the state owned forest. There are currently 14,651 acres classified as forest land A \$60,000 payment translates into a payment of \$4.00 per acre, as a payment in lieu of taxes.

Voluntown consists of 24,323 acres, of which the state owns 15,945 acres, or 65.6% of the town, Residential and commercial acreage total 8,229 acres or 33.8% of the town, the remaining 149 acres or .6% consist of tax exempt properties.

Because the state being the major landowner in the town results in a reduction of land available for commercial development. The impact of the town's tax base and resulting financial consequences of the state's exiting PILOT program and unfairness is dramatic.

PILOT payments have declined steadily with the 2014-15 calculated payment decreasing to \$147,923 with a further decline proposed for 2015-16. This years PILOT payment represents a decline of 28.5% compared to 2009. The states land holdings account for 65.6% of the town yet the pilot payments represent only 3.9% of the total tax payments. Which translates into 96.1% of the tax burden falling on the local taxpayer. The current system results in Voluntown subsidizing the State. The State is the majority stakeholder in the town but pays the least amount!

Basically, the level of funding we receive this year would remain going forward and that would be it, attempts to change the pilot would be fruitless.

Long range this would be devastating to the town of Voluntown,

NECOGG has said: If passed, this bill will have significant impact your town.

Please look at the fairness to all towns when proposing and voting on this bill. If passed, Voluntown will experience skyrocketing taxes, loss of home values, and residents moving out as quickly as possible. The state forest, 14651 acres of our town, needs to be funded properly for our town to survive. There is simply no land for other businesses or homes to be built in sufficient number to offset this bill should it pass.

Martha J Wittwer (concerned and VOTING citizen of Voluntown)